tech one of us has his own way of deceiving himself. The important thing is to believe in one's own importance.

In front of Henri Albert, Leon Blum, Charles Chanvin, Marcel Drouin (whom I had brought together for lunch), out of vanity I launched a few bloomers. Nothing humiliates me more profoundly, causes me to reproach myself more, or is easier for me to do again. I am no good except when alone. In a group it's not so much the others that bore and annoy me; it's myself.

After lunch the conversation becomes animated; that is to say that several talk at one time. Chanvin, Blum, and Albert do not use the same vocabulary; and not one of them is aware of this. The best thing for the one who is listening then is to be silent, if he doesn't want to have the three others jump on him at once.

The question is to what extent Stendhal loved women, what he wanted of them, and what he actually did with them. Chanvin confused everything by calling "sensuality" what I should call the risque spirit. One ought to begin by defining one's terms.

In my opinion,[1] Stendhal felt much more interest in than love for women. I can readily conceive of him as proving to himself, at the brothel, that he is not so impotent as his subtlety makes him seem in the company of ladies and actresses.

He makes one recognize his mind to be more beautiful than his body. If I had been a woman, no one would have seemed to me less pleasing to satisfy and more pleasing to put off than Stendhal. To refuse oneself was to "stand up to him"; and in doing so one had the best of him.

Then, abruptly, and as if we already knew it, Henri Albert begins talking to us of Stendhal's syphilis! Then of Flaubert's!! We protest; he insists. . . . Marcel Drouin and I have just read Duclaux's lecture in

which it is stated that in any human gathering you can count one syphilitic out of six; and Drouin thinks: "What luck that there are only five of us!"

No warmth, no *charity* in Henri Albert's tone of voice. He talks only of the things he is sure of, and he is sure only of the things he has not invented. You feel that he has not the stuff to make a mistake and that

[1] I transcribe this passage although today, 25 March, it strikes me as rather false. I must admit finding in the *Souvenirs degotisme* (p. 23): "In ten years I have not gone to the brothel three times." [A.]